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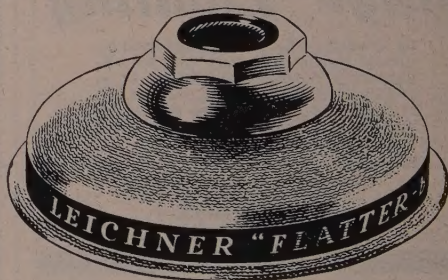


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THEATRE WORLD



Portrait by Cecil Beaton

Eileen Herlie

who is starring with Leslie Banks in Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, which, directed by Murray Macdonald and presented by Tennent Productions Ltd., opened at the Haymarket Theatre on 23rd August. The beautiful decor for this revival is by Cecil Beaton.

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(Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL and THE AMATEUR STAGE)

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Edited by Frances Stephens

September 1950

Over the Footlights

BROADWAY is to see no less than twelve plays from London in the next few months. This is something very unusual in the normal exchange of productions between New York and London, for on the whole American theatre offerings are more likely to succeed in London than English productions in America. This time New York playgoers will have the opportunity of seeing some of our most distinguished and successful plays of the last year or so.

Early arrivals on Broadway will be Dame Edith Evans and Cecil Parker in *Daphne Laureola*, James Bridie's delightful play, and Valerie Taylor, Basil Rathbone, George Relph and Marcia Swinburne in Aldous Huxley's *The Gioconda Smile*. Flora Robson will also be seen in *Black Chiffon* by Lesley Storm, while, when the present Shakespeare season ends at Stratford-upon-Avon, John Gielgud and Pamela Brown are to appear in *The Lady's Not for Burning*, which it is hoped will get a better reception than Christopher Fry's previous play, *A Phoenix Too Frequent*. Other plays destined for New York are *On Monday Next*; *Traveller's Joy*; *Ring Round the Moon*; *The Way Things Go*; *Miss Mabel*; *Accolade* and *Adventure Story*.

Nor should one, of course, overlook the long tour of the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company, due to commence their American and Canadian season at the Metropolitan Opera House on 10th September. In ballet and the new verse drama London reigns supreme.

It is to be noted that no British musical is included in the list and here we must bow the knee to America, who undoubtedly leads in this field. Up-to-date, however, there is no sign of the poetic renaissance among

American playwrights which has arrived so certainly over here.

Produced too late for review this month are the revival of *Rosmersholm* at St. Martin's Theatre on 22nd August; *The Little Hut*, a light comedy from the French, starring Robert Morley, at the Lyric on 23rd August and *For Love or Money* with Hermione Baddeley, Henry Kendall, Tod Slaughter and Pat Nye at the Ambassadors on 24th August. The revival of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* opened at the Haymarket on 29th August, and a new play by C. P. Snow called *View Over The Park* with John McCallum, Catherine Lacey and Mary Kerridge was seen at the Lyric, Hammersmith, on 30th August. The Arts Theatre revived Somerset Maugham's delightful comedy, *Home and Beauty*, also on 30th August, with Max Adrian, Brenda Bruce, Marjorie Dunkels, May Hallett, Barbara Leake and Anthony Marlowe in the cast.

Opening too late for review, is the new season of ballet at Covent Garden by the American National Ballet Theatre who came to London on 28th August from the Edinburgh Festival, with Nora Kaye, Igor Youskevitch, Alicia Alonso and John Kriza in the company. On 12th September the La Scala Opera Company from the Teatro Alla Scala, Milan, will give a short season of twelve performances only at Covent Garden, commencing with a performance of *Otello*. The season will end on 23rd September with *Falstaff*.

Among other productions due in September are *Accolade*, Emlyn Williams' new play (Aldwych, 7th September) and *Will Any Gentleman?* (Strand, 6th September). F.S.

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New Shows of the Month

- "Ace of Clubs"—Cambridge, 7th July.
- "Front Page Girl"—Q, 11th July.
- "The Taming of the Shrew"—Open Air, 17th July.
- "They Got What They Wanted"—Embassy, 18th July.
- "Mister Roberts"—Coliseum, 19th July.
- "The Gentle Gunman"—Arts, 2nd August.
- "Don't Lose Your Head"—Saville, 5th August.
- "Captain Carvallo"—St. James's, 9th August.

"Ace of Clubs"

AFTER our recent experience of the modern type of American musical in the shape of *Oklahoma!* *Annie, Get Your Gun*, *Carousel*, etc., Mr. Coward's latest work seems to be very much dated, and the really bright spots few and far between.

"Ace of Clubs" is the name of a night club in Soho, which is haunted by some shady characters. The star of the Club's cabaret, Pinkie Leroy, is the heroine of the piece, while a young sailor on leave, by name Harry Hornby, who is in love with Pinkie, inadvertently gets mixed up with a jewel robbery, and narrowly escapes death before the gangsters are brought to heel.

The main musical items arise out of the floor show given in the cabaret, though Pinkie and Harry have some good numbers in nearby Soho Square. As Pinkie, Pat Kirkwood is on top of her form, all vivacity and charm. Graham Payn, too, is most likeable as the sailor boy in quite a few song and dance numbers, particularly "Something about a Sailor" and "I Like America." Best of Miss Kirkwood's songs are "My Kind of Man," "Josephine" and "Chase Me Charlie."

The story required the inclusion of a number of non-singing members of the cast, including Elwyn Brook-Jones, Raymond Young and Myles Eason, while the well-known singer, Sylvia Cecil, appears as the night club hostess, Rita Marbury. The humour chiefly arises out of the antics of the cabaret girls, particularly Baby Belgrave (Jean Carson), though the joke by which the box containing the missing jewellery was exchanged for an intimate beautifying garment of female attire, wore thin long before the end.

Biggest applause of all was for the Juvenile Delinquents (Peter Tuddenham, Norman Warwick and Colin Kemball), who cleverly rendered a song redolent of the old Coward satirical wit. But since this item had little to do with the play proper, it was not enough

to infuse the piece with the speed and variety which seem inseparable from the current fashion in musicals. F.S.

"Front Page Girl"

FRONT Page Girl, a new play by William Dinner and William Morum, authors of *The Late Edwina Black*, is not so successful as that work, being less neatly finished, and more wasteful of material.

A young criminal, always ready to resort to violence in a difficulty, is not a very interesting study for an adult lay audience. As played by Anthony Newley, his crudity was very apparent. Joseph Stuart, as the young apprentice who unreasonably found attraction in him, was very natural, but it seemed that these young people were overburdened with their not very convincing parts.

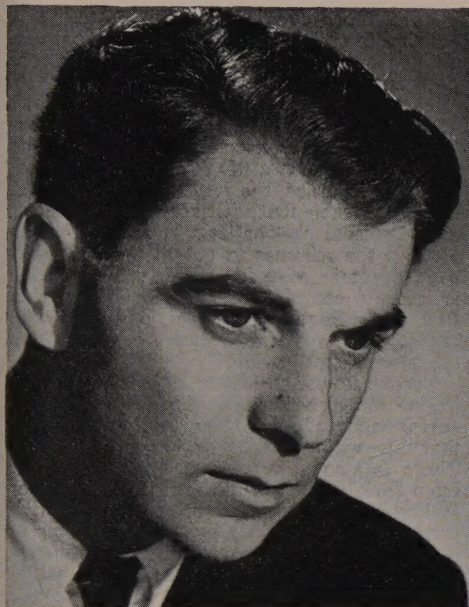
Some characters had sufficient interest and were sufficiently well played to set up inquiry as to how they became like that. Monsieur Valdo's behaviour to his clerk and the latter's toleration of it set up speculation in the mind of the beholder that was never satisfactorily allayed. Perhaps one should blame Paul Demel and Harold Scott for being too thorough and convincing. Certainly the parts were greater than the whole on this occasion. Joan Sanderson and Diana Hope also provided two very pleasing studies of what might be found in a fashion house.

The play was produced by Chloe Gibson. H.G.M.

"The Taming of the Shrew"

THIRD production this season was the popular knockabout entertainment *The Taming of the Shrew*, which never fails to please by brisk buffoonery, teasing and clowning.

Antony Eustrel was ever a taking Petruchio and he shows no falling off in his mastery of the character. His course with Katherine is never without a charming suggestion of hidden admiration. This is rough wooing; nothing worse. Ruth Lodge gave a very good account of Katherine through the stages of rage, sullen resignation, humorous compliance and final tender grace, and Judith Stott was a prettily peevish Bianca. Toke Townley served the humorous capers of Grumio with his accustomed verve. As Biondello, Peter Fawcett drew applause for his delivery of the long, breathless, tongue-twisting speech describing the ride from the church, but Biondello seemed to need a touch of the extraordinary, the extravagant. Here he was merely miserable



EMLYN WILLIAMS

who, after a long absence, will be seen in London again when he comes to the Aldwych on 7th September to star in his own play *Accolade*, which, directed by Glen Byam Shaw, has been on a prior-to-London tour.

(Portrait by Angus McBean)



DIANA CHURCHILL

is starring with Mr. Emlyn Williams in *Accolade*. Miss Churchill, one of our most versatile young actresses, was a member of the Old Vic Theatre Company, during their last season and previous to that made a big hit in the revue *Oranges and Lemons*.

(Portrait by John Vickers)

dressed and seemed correspondingly heavy of heart.

I am inclined to think the induction is more trouble than it is worth. Sly was quite a novelty twenty years ago. He has now ceased to be that and threatens to become a bore. Raymond Rollett did all that could be done with him. The whole affair, once we were into the play proper, was an enjoyable romp for which particular credit is due, in addition to those already mentioned, to Michael Godfrey as Baptista, to Clement Hamelin as Gremio, to David Powell as Hortensio and to Aubrey Woods as Tranio. H.G.M.

"They Got What They Wanted"

LOUIS D'ALTON'S comedy from the Dublin Abbey Theatre under its intriguing title, played by an all-Irish Company, tested the sophisticated Embassy Theatre audience's capacity for rollicking enjoyment. To their credit as well as the players, let it be said that they passed the test with honours.

Memories of Charles Lever and George A. Birmingham were evoked by this gloriously

preposterous tale of a hard up Irish family's bid for fortune by the scheming of a wily father, who plays on the cupidity and credulity of his long suffering creditors till they ask him as a favour to accept free gifts and loans without security and all the household necessities his long suffering wife has previously been at her wit's end to obtain on credit.

The plot revolves round an American lawyer's quest for a missing heir to a fortune. Bartley Murnaghan (played with rare and engaging gusto by Mark Daly) supplies not exactly the heir, but the hint that the heir is none but he.

The hint is enough. Spreading like wild fire around the village, it places him on a pedestal and makes him the arbiter of the community's business life; so that not only he but all his family are suddenly basking in the sunshine of unaccustomed prosperity.

Even when the bubble is burst he contrives matters so ingeniously that, without any fraudulent acts, he is able to consolidate the family's new found fortunes—and all without compromising his root determination never to do a hand's turn of work himself.

The plot is worked out with great ingenuity and the unfolding of it brings about situations as entertaining as they are unexpected.

In addition to Mark Daly's rich and ripe performance, there are other delicious characters in Owney Tubridy, the small town spiv, and Matty McGrath, hot tempered farmer, admirably played by Liam Redmond and Malachi Keegan respectively.

Patricia Driscoll and Sheila Martin portray the daughters with charm and sincerity; Anita Bolster gives a good character study of Mother Murnaghan; while the three sons—all recognisable Irish types of pleasant but ineffective young men—are competently played by Donald McClymont, Colin Loudan and Charles Fitzsimons.

W.B.C.

"Mister Roberts"

THIS play's chief strength is also its weakness. Having restaged the piece on a much vaster stage than in New York, Joshua Logan, part author and producer, and Jo Mielziner, in charge of lighting and decor, wisely no doubt, went all out for spectacle. Somehow that spectacle detracts from the human element, though we do not see what else could have been done. We feel that against a somewhat less overpowering superstructure, the wartime story of these men living and hating together in the confines of an old cargo boat would have moved us more, and in particular the underlying theme of the cargo officer, Mister Roberts, who longed to get into real battle, would have

seemed more convincing, and his untimely and ironic end over a cup of coffee, practically on his first day of active service, more poignant.

But as spectacle it is magnificent. No lack of crudities here or sweating bodies or sex-laden talk to demonstrate the horrors of the monotony of such a life. The fights aboard, the near mutinies, the return of the drunken crew after their first visit ashore for months, are all visual and balletic in tone. Not so obvious the schemes to outwit the childishly brutal captain, who for all his self-confessed inferiority complex, does not always ring true. For English audiences, of course, the accustomed American lack of discipline takes some swallowing.

Tyrone Power as Mister Roberts who controlled the crew like a loving father, gives a performance of moving restraint, and proves that his acting ability is no mean thing. There is also a good comedy performance from Jackie Cooper, the film star, as Mister Roberts' slightly nit-wit room mate, and a picture of real integrity by Russell Collins as the ship's doctor. George Matthews blusters effectively as the captain. The crew must be thanked to a man, but why introduce the nurse: to be consistently in character the play should be entirely womanless. F.S.

"The Gentle Gunman"

ROGER MacDougall's second play endorses and amplifies the promise held forth by his first, *Macadam and Eve*, which was produced at Kew six months ago. It is shapely, the dialogue is meaty, the characterisation convincing and the action exciting. We are made to feel that within a minute anything may happen. Whether anything does or not is of less importance in the theatre. All the gunmen in the play are comparatively gentle. Their bark is worse than their bite. Though their fingers are ever on the trigger, something always occurs to stay pressure and the only serious injury is the result of a road accident. An English judge is locked up in a garage, let out to drink tea, locked up again and again released to finish an argument.

"The action takes place in Ireland, on both sides of the border," states the programme. It also takes place on the borders of sanity and looking-glass land, where desperate courses are followed with crazy logic for the sake of a cause. The only English character is a judge remembered for severe sentences on members of the I.R.A. For twenty years this Daniel has left the seat of judgment to put his head in the lion's mouth for his annual vacation. In the play he is recognised by men he has sent to prison, recognised on their ground and let off lightly. Perhaps a more improbable character is the turncoat terrorist, yet that a man could ge



A delightfully informal picture of Jackie Cooper, the film star, and his wife, Hildy Parks, both of whom are appearing in *Mister Roberts* at the Coliseum. Mr. Cooper has made a real hit with his comedy performance as Ensign Pulver. This picture was taken during a break in rehearsals just prior to the opening of the play.

(Picture by Zinn Arthur)

(Continued on page facing)

tired of the game of violence is very credible. That he should go back to his gang to preach to them the folly of it all is unlikely but it is the kind of unlikely action that has to be accepted to start a story or a play. His pacifism is enforced by a Falstaffian view of honour; where does it get you?

Robin Bailey, as the gunman bored with gunnery, makes a notable success of this tricky part. He is plausible, nonchalant, loquacious, resourceful and unpredictable. The play opens and closes in argument between the English judge and an Irish doctor. As the doctor, serious, choleric, sincere, dogmatic and dutiful, E. J. Kennedy is most engaging. As the judge, Henry Hewitt humanises a part that is rather type. Michael Golden makes a deep impression as a heavy and intimidating garage proprietor who gives all his time and force to the direction of a small but very mischievous terrorist movement. Robert Mooney's ambulance attendant brings a brief, delightful touch of farce. Louise Hampton has a tragic but thin part, none of which is lost in her care. Women are shown only in relation to I.R.A. activity; a young one, played by Maureen Pryor, to abet and encourage, and an old one to deplore.

Whether argument, surgery, kidnapping or conspiracy are toward, there is whiskey galore to float it. H.G.M.

"Don't Lose Your Head"

ON the face of it, the liability of a young woman to have her pretty head chopped off, shrunken to the size of an orange and removed to adorn the temple of some savage tribe in the back of beyond is not a laughing matter. Yet such is the theme of the extravagant farce which—occasionally—convulsed with merriment August holiday theatregoers at the Saville.

Source of the merriment was, however, neither the theme nor the head (belonging to Lana Morris, in the part of Maisie Tankerdine), but Harry Green's engaging portrayal of comfortable villainy in the cause of justice. If this is difficult to make sense of, so was the play, which represented the united efforts of three playwrights, E. P. Conkle, Irving St. John and adaptor Talbot Rothwell.

Disentangled, the plot is the mission of a high priest, "Mr. Nu," and his prince, "Mr. Tut," to find, decapitate, preserve and purloin a perfect human head. Said head is found on the shoulders of the daughter of the landlord of the "Wedge and Beetle" public house on the Yorkshire moors. Finder is Mr. Connor, business agent of the head hunters, a sort of prospector of heads, working on a commission basis. This was Harry Green.

Twists in the plot are twofold: (1) The owner of the head turns out to be a girl the prince had fallen for in his undergraduate days at Oxford and, therefore, being a per-



LAVERNE BURDEN

who recently took over the role of Julie Jordan in *Carousel*, the successful musical play at Drury Lane, which followed *Oklahoma!*

(Picture by Angus McBean)

fect gentleman, he calls the sacrificial ceremony off, to the priest's great disgust; (2) The old sinner Connor, who has been egging him on to do the chopping, in order to earn his usual commission, turns out to be a G-man, sent over by the American F.B.I. to round the gang up.

Incidentally, the preserving lotion, instead of shrinking the head of the girl, shrinks her father's prized outside marrow, and, to show its potency still further, finishes by diminishing the tall fanatical priest into a fractious little dark skinned boy.

John Bailey is a distinguished Mr. Tut and Ivan Staff, as Mr. Nu, combines his priestly offices with virtuosity as a contortionist. Liz, the inn's "general," is attractively played by Valerie Forrest. Charles Hill's comic policeman is the embodiment of all the comic policemen that ever were. W.B.C.

"Captain Carvallo"

WITH his second play Denis Cannan leaps to fame as a playwright of more than usual talent. It is not over easy to classify this new work, which in many ways is an extraordinary mixture of Shavian wit and rollicking farce, and one has to admit that following the hilarious second act which came very near to bedroom farce the third act halted somewhat and we were not altogether prepared for the fine serious passage between the Captain and Smilja.

As with Shaw, the characters are used as

mouthpieces for Mr. Cannan's comments on all aspects of modern life, mostly extremely cynical, and war, religion and marriage are good targets. The pace set by the producer, Laurence Olivier, is very fast and the scintillating shafts of wit are made to tumble out with little pause for breath. Perhaps the author has been a little too anxious to get over his message by making us laugh instead of making us think, but the net result is an extremely good evening's entertainment.

There can be no complaints about the acting. James Donald is most persuasive as the romantic Captain Carvallo, who appears to have a wife in every billet and goes into battle with a geranium in a pot. We are to believe that he has really fallen in love with Smilja Darde, and why not, for never was anyone more modestly alluring than Diana Wynyard. The play takes place during a civil war and Smilja's ridiculous dissenting lay-preacher husband has been roped in as a member of the underground movement together with Professor Winke, who does his bit of unloved patriotic service in order to guarantee his future career. When Captain Carvallo, officer of the enemy, billets himself on the Dardes for the night there ensues an indescribable mêlée of mistaken identities and illicit love. Smilja has her romance and Carvallo departs wistfully. Richard Goolden as Caspar Darde is irresistible in the Robert-

son Hare tradition and Peter Finch astonishes with his maturity as the professor. Jill Bennett is a likeable servant girl; Thomas Heathcote a typically dishonest batman and Anthony Pelly most amusing as the bibulous Baron. F.S.

Toynebee Hall Theatre

ON 1st August "Theatre for the Under 20's" presented a children's bill consisting of *Peter and the Wolf*, a history lesson in costume and some clowning with ladders and whitewash. The two intervals were filled with music by Haydn and Mozart. There is nothing new in the items themselves, but there is novelty in their juxtaposition. Actually, the most unusual item was the least popular, Dr. Johnson and his circle being too didactic for the entertainment of the young.

Peter and the Wolf was very gracefully mimed, well dressed and well staged. The whole show, indeed, was very well presented under the direction of Alan Jefferson.

The music between the items was quite unregarded by the juvenile audience. Accustomed as we all are to incessant background noises, often musical, it is necessary to call attention to anything worth listening to. This, of course, can be done on future occasions.

H.G.M.

(See also page 33)

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Badger: I seem to recognise your face.

Herbert: Yours isn't exactly unfamiliar. What's your name?

Badger: You ought to know.

An amusing moment in the opening scene, when Petty Officer Herbert instructs the four volunteers on their arrival on the island near Scapa Flow. Able-Seaman Badger discovers he had met the unpopular Petty Officer previously in his career. (L. to R.): RONALD SHINER as Able Seaman Badger, BERNARD LEE as A.B. Turner ("Lofty"), JOHN GREGSON as A.B. McIntosh ("Haggis"), NIGEL STOCK as A.B. Sims ("Sprog") and WILLIAM HARTNELL as Petty Officer Herbert.

"*Seagulls over Sorrento*"

AT THE APOLLO

HUGH Hastings' likeable play is one of the big successes in Town. Readers of the review published last month will recall that *Seagulls over Sorrento* tells the story of a group of volunteers in a disused wartime Naval fortress where secret peace-time radar experiments are going on. No woman appears on the scene though naturally women are much in the conversation, and although the play has many serious moments (for all the men have their own reasons for volunteering), it is undoubtedly for its rich comedy that it has achieved such outstanding success. And needless to say Ronald Shiner can be held accountable for the biggest laughs. The interest in the oddly assorted men who are thus flung together in a remote spot never flags and without a doubt Hugh Hastings has more than a gift for characterisation and the happily turned phrase. Wallace Douglas has directed the play, and the decor, conveying very effectively the bare interior of a disused Naval fortress, with a glimpse of desolate waters beyond, is the work of Michael Weight.

PICTURES BY ANGUS McBEAN



Redmond: Shore leave?

Badger: Yes, sir.

Redmond: There's nothing to go ashore for—except sheep.

When Lt.-Cmdr. Redmond later comes along he is unable to give them full particulars of the secret work for which they have volunteered. But needless to say, when the Commander asks if the men have any questions to ask, the ebullient Badger loses no time.

(Peter Gray as Lt.-Cmdr. Redmond, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N., and second from right, Robert Desmond as Sub-Lieut. Granger, R.N.)



Badger: I'm Badger, as you gathered. Then there's Lofty, Sprog, and the one with the dreamy eyes and the foreign accent, gazin' into his tea 'Aggis—spelled with an H.

The four men are joined by A.B. Hudson (Gerald Anderson, right) and Badger does the introduction. Hudson, who spends his time in the laboratory experimenting with a new radio device, is a bit of a dark horse.



Badger: It's always been the same with the 'ole blasted communications crowd and all the 'angers-on new-fangled parasite sun-branches like radar. They think they're too b— intelligent to get down and do something quite so low as scrubbing the messdeck—might soil their lily-white 'hands.

Badger, self-appointed cook for the party, takes exception to Hudson's disinclination to help with the chores.



Badger: Go on, 'Aggis—'ave something. You'll starve yourself to death!

Haggis: No thanks—no reflection on your cooking, Badge, but tomatoes and me just don't see eye to eye.

The dour Scotsman, Haggis, does not respond even to Badger's idle chatter. We learn later that the trouble in his life is the tragedy of his young wife who is in a mental home.



Lofty: You lay off him, do you understand? You leave that kid alone, or you'll answer to me!

Lofty, who has an uncontrollable temper that has often led to trouble, has taken young Sprog under his wing and is suspicious of the bullying Petty Officer's motives in ordering the boy to do jobs in his cabin. But Herbert only awaits his chance to score against Lofty.



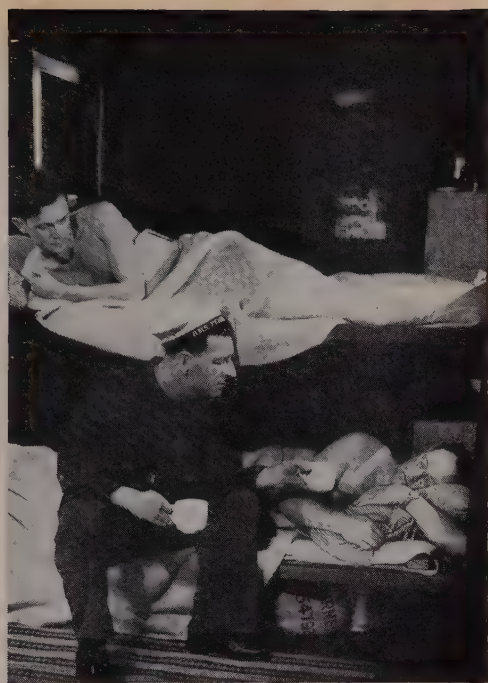
Redmond: It was his own wish that he should come here as a rating rather than an officer. This morning in the radar cabin, he was playing with something new in the way of fuses, and all we know is that he blew himself sky-high.

Early one morning about a week after the opening of the play, Hudson loses his life in a mysterious explosion. Lt.-Cmdr. Redmond, in telling the men the news, now gives them some idea that the Station has been working on a new torpedo for use in submarines, and that one of them will be required to go out on a test.



Badger: "Dear Badger:
I am sorry I was so
useless on the mess
deck. You were quite
right about my hands.
You see it was abso-
lutely essential that
I did nothing at all that
interfered with my
'touch'"

The death of Hud-
son, whom they
had all grown to
admire, is a big
blow for the men
and, as requested
in his letter, they
all agree that they
will go and see his
wife immediately
they have finished
the job in Scapa
Flow.



Above:
Herbert: Switch off that racket and turn to!

Badger, in an effort to cheer up the men after Hudson's tragic end, adorns himself in the galley, and does a variety act which is interrupted by Petty Officer Herbert.

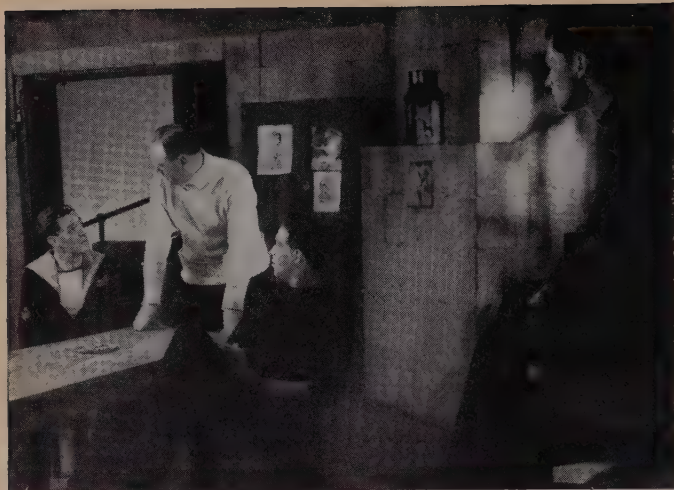
Above right:
Lofty (half-asleep): Give me another kiss before I go.

The amusing early morning scene a week later when Badger has some difficulty in waking Lofty after a pleasant dream.

Right:
Sprog: Gee, Haggis, thanks a lot. I never had a present before.

Young Sprog, who is only twenty-one, had been an orphanage boy and never knew who his parents were, though he likes to think he has Italian blood. It was he who in the opening scene christened the Naval fortress "Sorrento," for obvious reasons. He is overjoyed with Haggis' gift of a mouth-organ.





Left:

Lofty: What name did you say?
Cleland: Cleland. What's the joke?

There is a new arrival—telegraphist, and when he hears to his amazement that he is Cleland, which is the name of the man who ran away with Badger's wife. The boys anticipate some fun when Badger arrives from the galley. (David Langton as Cleland.)

Right:

Cleland: Now wait a minute, Badger, old boy . . .

Badger: He asks me to wait! I waited too long, chum! Ever since Eve did the dirty on Adam, I've waited, and while we're on the subject, do tell me something I've been itchin' to know for a long time—such a long time. 'Ow's my wife? 'Ow's that girl friend of yours . . . Mrs. Badger?

Badger and Cleland meet.



Left:

Haggis: Och, hell! It's a blank!
Sprog: And so is mine.

The moment arrives for the four men to draw lots for the dangerous test which is to take place that night. Lofty organizes the draw and picks the marked paper, though later Sprog swears that Lofty arranged it and drew a blank too.



Herbert: Oh—you told him not to go? *Lofty:* That's right.
Herbert: And since when did you make up your mind to encourage junior ratings to disobey my orders?

As a result of this latest clash Herbert tries to prevent Lofty from going on the submarine for the test.



Lofty: Hold him there lads. Hold him there till Granger and I get clear of the island. I'll see yer in jail!

The men take a hand and pin Petty Officer Herbert down on the floor until Lofty is well away.



Badger: And sometimes, 'Aggis, I think you're just a wee bit gormless!

Haggis: Oh . . . why?

Badger: Well, I ask yer! Look at 'im. Just look at 'im! Do you think 'e's in any frame of mind to start playin' a b— marf-organ!

Young Sprog, who is devotedly attached to Lofty, is sure that he will never come back, and cannot sleep that night. Haggis tries to comfort the boy by suggesting he should take a turn on the mouth-organ. Just around midnight there had been a terrible explosion out to sea and there seems little likelihood that Lofty and Lt. Granger could have survived in their midget submarine.

Lofty: Hey, come on now.
What's all this?

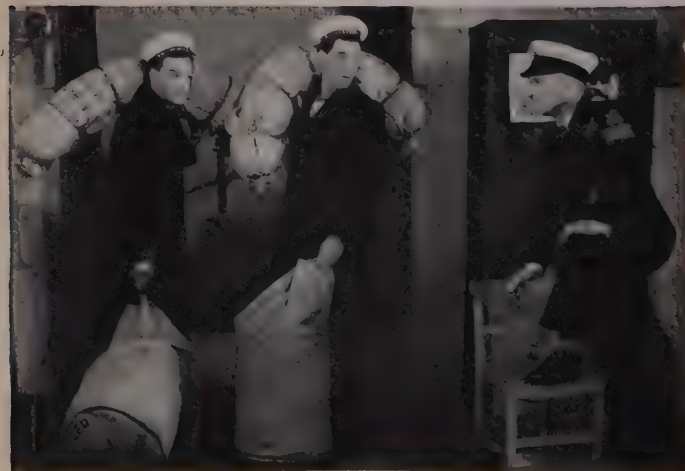
Sprog: I . . . I thought you
were dead, Lofty. I thought
. . . I thought you were never
coming back.

Lofty returns safe and
sound. The experiment
had been a complete suc-
cess and the explosion
had actually been aboard
their target—a derelict
ship. Sprog can scarcely
believe his eyes when he
realises the best friend he
ever had has returned
unharmd.



Badger: When you and
missus was livin' together
Wot do you reckon was
most irritatin' thing a
her?

Next morning, follow-
ing the entirely successful
experiment, the men are
on leave and, thanks to
the magnanimity of the
Commander, who has
idea of Herbert's
character, they are spared
the court martial which
they felt certain would
be theirs after the Her-
bert incident of the morn-
ing before. By now Badger
and Cleland are
friends and ready to
cuss the shortcomings of
Mrs. Badger, who, ac-
cidentally, has also desec-
rated Cleland.



Herbert: When you two ge-
nlemen have finished your
confab, about your mis-
lady-friend . . .

Badger: Lady? That was
lady, mate!

Cleland } That was our

The final moment of the
play.



Mr. Warwick Armstrong's suggested design for *The Tempest*, a striking piece of work fully dealt with in this article.

CREATIVE ARTISTS IN THE THEATRE

by ELISABETHE H. C. CORATHIEL

5. Warwick Armstrong

THE foundation of every National Theatre—and by National I do not mean necessarily a state-aided institution, but one which represents the cultural summit of whichever country it happens to adorn—must always rest upon its inalienable heritage of classical drama.

In other words, upon a static element—but one which remains vividly alive, kept fresh for successive generations of playgoers by the ever-renewed vitality brought to it by crop after crop of young producers and artistic directors, approaching standard works with a dynamic creative impulse. The epoch-making impact of these newcomers is inclined to be in exact ratio to their freedom from inhibitions imposed by undue reverence for the achievements of their immediate predecessors.

Hence it is on the decorative and interpretative side that the theatre in general tends to show more palpable signs of elasticity and growth than on the productivity of its playwrights.

The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon went to the Antipodes in search of ideas for its Festival this year, bringing in the young Australian artist, Warwick Armstrong, to design the sets for

Julius Caesar, with results which were remarkably stimulating.

The freshness and originality of Warwick Armstrong's work, by his own admission, owes something to the very paucity of influences under which an Australian aspirant to theatrical distinction is forced to seek experience. "We have so few theatres in which artistic enterprises of a non-commercial nature can be studied," he says. "If we want to learn, we have to go to original sources—to books which sum up the great creative achievements of the past. Luckily, in this field, Australian libraries and booksellers can supply the best examples available; it is only a matter of diligence on the student's part." Warwick Armstrong certainly was diligent.

So it was no mere coincidence that the young artist, born in Melbourne thirty years ago, and originally destined for a career in architecture, went back to the Elizabethan "apron stage" as the model which offered more possibilities than any other, and based some of his most thought-provoking inventions upon the very limitations under which Shakespeare's own contemporaries had to labour.

(Continued overleaf)

Consequently, when the producer of *Julius Caesar*, Mr. Anthony Quayle, called for a set in which the whole of the first part, involving the House of Brutus, the House of Cæsar, the Forum Scene and the Senate, could be carried through without a break, without a single curtain-fall, Warwick Armstrong simply turned his accumulated experience of the Elizabethan Theatre to account, and produced a décor with a typical Roman colonade off-centre receding diagonally into the distance and providing a number of exciting vistas, which met the situation with astonishing success.

The underlying idea of his treatment of all the classical dramas, which call for many changes of scene, is to employ the very oldest devices, reducing the raising and lowering of the curtain to a minimum. Starting from the generally accepted belief that the very earliest "stage," developed out of a pageant-float of the mediæval religious processions, was a wagon with three "levels" (the lower part curtained off as "tiring" room for the players, the floor of the wagon as the stage-proper, with an erection over it for the enactment of various "supernatural" effects), Mr. Armstrong, too, has exploited many possibilities of working on more than one level, a fact which raises a storm of discussion over some of his working drawings, until the scene is actually tested in action.

Typical is his suggested set for *The Tempest*, which I am able to reproduce, and which aims at realising the "wagon" effect in a more elaborate and sophisticated way.

The stylised scene has an opening in the centre, through which we glimpse the interior of Prospero's cave; actually the whole stage is supposed to represent the magic island, the idea being rounded off by the back-cloth which shows on one side the Ship, riding on an emerald sea, and on the other, a line of cliffs merging into dense forest. Right across the stage (the second level) runs a gallery of light rails—so light that when the stage-lighting comes into play, the rails are practically invisible. As in the old "Mysteries," all the "supernatural" scenes of the play are enacted on this level. For instance, whenever Ariel appears, it is usually on the gallery. Prospero also used it for his "magic," and the Goddesses make their entrance there. In the centre is a baldachin which is partially identified with a central rock on the back-cloth; through this completely stylised device we get a glimpse of cloud-flecked azure sky, which in its turn gives an additional hint of the "supernatural" realm beyond the island. What the whole scene lacks in realism as a picture on paper becomes completely convincing when the action makes use of each particular patch of background, and the stage lights bring section after section of the stage to life.

Such daring experiments would perhaps repel, were it not for the fact that Warwick Armstrong has the testimony of his own

achievements to throw into the scale on his own side of the argument.

When, in the 40's, he began to lose interest in his own profession of architecture, he gathered round him a group of fellow-enthusiasts, and they formed their own Theatre Guild—the most ambitious venture of its kind in Australia. Renting a little suburban theatre with a seating capacity of 500, they made history by producing *Othello*, with music specially written, and Warwick Armstrong's special scenery. Everything, from costumes down to the smallest "property," was hand-made by members of the Guild. The venture was a brave one, and could easily have ruined its promotor, who financed it entirely with his own slender capital. While it did not make a fortune, at any rate it did not lose money; artistically, it was a distinct triumph. "What I did feel it proved—at any rate for me in Australia," says Mr. Armstrong, "is that the public will come to something that is really good." Other managements began to take notice of the brilliant young designer; Australian Theatre Guild productions were invited to go on tour, and one or two of them were transferred to the Princess Theatre, Melbourne. Warwick Armstrong had "arrived"—and although the history-making Australian Theatre Guild is no more, nearly all those who were so bravely associated with the venture have found important jobs in the wider world. It led to Mr. Armstrong's getting his chance at Stratford-upon-Avon—and there, to his great joy, he recognised in the Stage Manager Tony Riddell, who had been the "Iago" in his memorable Australian little-theatre production of *Othello*.

Summing up, Mr. Armstrong said: "My experience as an architect is undoubtedly of the greatest value in my work as a stage designer, but for inspiration I always go back to the earliest artists of the theatre—especially to the Bibiena models. Perspective fascinates me, and the possibilities of stylised perspective are endless in stage sets with an architectural quality.

"I try to avoid a personal style which can always be identified as mine. In my opinion it is bad for a designer to stamp his personality too much on the work he is doing. I approach each fresh assignment as a problem to be solved, not as a picture-frame in which to display my own particular fancies. A set which is to suit its purpose can only be devised in consultation with the producer and the leading actors, taking into account, of course, the actual conditions in the theatre.

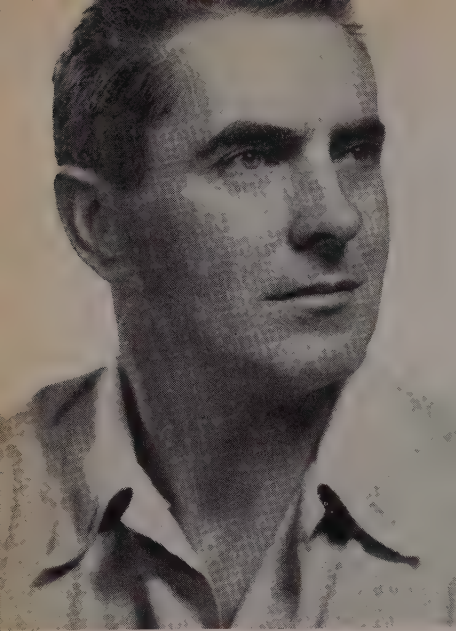
"Since arriving in England, I have learnt a great deal—my feeling for colour, for instance, has undergone a great change. I am immensely impressed by the great traditions underlying so many of the English institutions, and my greatest ambition is to do the décor for an opera or a ballet at Covent Garden."



"King Lear"
at
Stratford-upon-Avon

Angus McBean
Lear: Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge —.
Goneril, our eldest-born, speak first.

The opening scene from Anthony Quayle and John Gielgud's impressive production of *Lear*, with decor by Leslie Hurry, showing *left to right*, Maxine Audley as Goneril, John Gielgud as Lear and Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies as Regan.



The Three Powers

by ERIC JOHNS

Left:

TYRONE POWER
as Mister Roberts

(Portrait by Talbot, New York)

WHEN Tyrone Power eventually returns to America at the conclusion of the run of *Mister Roberts* at the Coliseum, the most precious item in his luggage will be a copy of the playbill advertising his first appearance in London, in the title rôle of this highly successful American naval play. The bill will be framed and hung in a little bar in Mr. Power's home, beside other playbills announcing the London appearances of two other Tyrone Powers, the present actor's father and great-grandfather. Our Mr. Power gains enormous satisfaction from following the family footsteps and conquering London in no uncertain fashion. He will feel the wheel has really come full circle when he hangs his own playbill on the wall.

The first Tyrone Power was born in Glamorgan at the very end of the 18th century. His real name was David Powell. He was attracted to the theatre, but his early appearances were disastrous on account of a strong Welsh accent. An Irish actor in the same company gave him some valuable elocution lessons, but young Powell's luck did not turn until he had the bright idea of changing his name to Tyrone Power and specialising in Irish parts. An "Irish" actor was not easy to come by at that time, so Power was snapped up by the Haymarket management, and according to Macqueen-Pope in his most readable history of that famous theatre, this new idol, with his fascinating synthetic brogue, earned £150 a week, which was more than Macready drew at the same theatre. At the early age of 43 he was drowned in the Atlantic, shipwrecked as he

returned from a successful American tour.

Twenty-eight years later another Tyrone Power, grandson of the Haymarket actor and father of our present Mr. Power, was born in London. Early in his career Tyrone Power II became a member of Daly's Company in America, remaining with them for nine years. At the Princess's Theatre in London in 1897 he played the leading part in his own play, *The Texan*, and the following year appeared with Tree at His Majesty's and later with Irving. In America he played in company of such favourite actresses as Mrs. Fiske, Mrs. Leslie Carter and Julia Marlowe. When Tyrone Power III was a baby his father was a member of William Faversham's Company in America, and so was our own Bertha Belmore, playing Portia in *Julius Caesar* and nursing the infant Tyrone in the dressing room during her waits.

The Mr. Power who is giving us such pleasure with his intensely human performance as the Cargo Officer in *Mister Roberts* was a mere lad of 17, when his father died at the age of 61. Before adopting the stage, professionally he worked as an usher and soda fountain dispenser, but later studied for the stage under his father, making his debut only a few months' before the elder Tyrone's death, in a small part in *The Merchant of Venice*. After touring America with Eugenie Leontovitch in *Romance*, he joined Katharine Cornell's Company, understudying Burgess Meredith in *The Flowers of the Forest*, and playing Benvolio when *Romeo and Juliet* was staged with Miss Cornell and Basil Rathbone as the lovers and Edith Evans as the Nurse. A year later, in 1936, he played Bertrand de Poulengy when Miss Cornell was seen as Shaw's Saint Joan on Broadway, with Maurice Evans as the Dauphin. So Tyrone Power has the theatre in his blood and is not just another Hollywood glamour boy using a succession of popular films as a box office bait for London playgoers.

In order to win that first London playbill bearing his own name, Mr. Power had to endure the most agonising ordeal of his career. Though he had been to the Coliseum as a playgoer when holidaying in London in

(Continued on page 28)

In the News

Right:

“Captain Carvallo”

An amusing moment from the first act of Denis Cannan's delightful new comedy which has had an enthusiastic reception at the St. James's Theatre, where it is presented by Laurence Olivier. In the picture are seen Peter Finch as Professor Winke and Diana Wynyard as Smilja Darde.

(Picture by Angus McBean)



Left:

“The Cocktail Party”

Hugh Sinclair as Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly and Irene Worth as Celia Coplestone, in T. S. Eliot's play at the New Theatre. Hugh Sinclair has taken over from Rex Harrison and Irene Worth has resumed the role she created at Edinburgh and subsequently played in New York. *The Cocktail Party* continues to be one of the biggest draws in the West End.

(Picture by Anthony Buckley)



WHITEHALL THEATRE

"The Dish Ran Away..."

Scenes from the new farcical comedy which followed *Worm's Eye View* at the Whitehall. Freely adapted from the French play of G. Larue by Graham Fraser, *The Dish Ran Away* ... was fully reviewed in our last issue and though receiving some adverse criticism has settled down to a promising success.

Left: Frank Leighton and Betty Paul who play the leading parts of Peter and Desiree. Mr. Paul particularly has been highly praised for her irresistible performance. Below, L. to R. Emma Treckman as Daphne, Winifred Evans as her mother-in-law, and Blanche Fothergill as Olga.



Daphne: Don't turn the dough.

Daphne Perry in an amusing moment in the kitchen with Desiree, her husband's mistress. A scene from Act 2.



Mrs. Perry: Oh, a little Harvey.

Wife and mother-in-law with a toy intended for Desiree's baby, who has surprisingly received a welcome. Another moment from Act 2.

Highspots of Betty Paul's delightful performance are the songs introduced into each Act. Here she is seen in Act 3, singing "Remember, I've never been kissed before." On the right is Gordon Tanner as John Gribble.



PICTURES BY

DENIS de MARNEY



Above:

"Flashbacks to 1920," one of the most amusing items in the show. The picture gives an idea of the type of line-up featured in the up-to-date London revue of 30 years ago.



Left:

By way of contrast a picture of the tempestuous Fortunio in the up-to-the minute "Un Nuit Tropicale," a gay and colourful dance number.



"Latin Quarter 1950"

AT THE CASINO

Left:

The now famous "Les Compagnons de la Chanson," a team of brilliant French singers who have proved themselves one of the most popular items on the programme. They appear in the nostalgic sequence entitled

"Paris After Dark."

Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON

THE romantic possibility of an actor rising from the chorus to stardom still exists in the theatre. Graham Payn, whose finest achievement to date is his present virile playing of Harry Hornby, the sailor hero of Noël Coward's *Ace of Clubs* at the Cambridge Theatre, reached the higher rungs of the ladder by graduating from the chorus. But it was not a question of fame in a night!

As a boy Mr. Payn came over to this country from South Africa, idolising the elder Douglas Fairbanks, who inspired him with an ambition to be a Don Q of Zorro when he grew up. In time his boy soprano voice and a passion for dancing suggested that he might branch out as a different form of entertainer. By the age of 13 he was playing Curley in *Peter Pan*, when Jean Forbes-Robertson was enjoying her incredibly long reign as Peter.

Other child engagements followed, but at the age of 19 he decided to take his first real job in the theatre by joining the chorus of *And on We Go*, a Robert Nesbitt revue, staged at the Savoy with Marie Löhr, June Knight and Charles Heslop in the cast. From that engagement he went to a Charlott non-stop revue at the Vaudeville to replace John Byron who had hurt his back. In those days Mr. Byron, who has since played Hamlet at Stratford, had a considerable reputation as a ballet dancer. At the end of the run Mr. Payn asked André Charlott if he might be in his next revue, to which the great producer replied, "No. You were sadly miscast in the last one!" He had to agree, never having aspired to become a ballet dancer.

Undaunted, he looked for another chorus job and found one in *Crazy Days*, a Stanley Lupino show at the Shaftesbury, following it with a spell in revue at the London Casino, where he was fired within a fortnight for not being able to lift a dancer in such a manner as to give the impression of a bird in flight. His arms sagged and she appeared to lose height instead of floating evenly across the stage in mid-air.

Just before the Second World War he was understudying Jack Donohue at Princes in *Sitting Pretty*, which starred Patricia Burke, Vera Pearce, Sydney Howard and Arthur Riscoe. His career did not really begin to move until after he was invalided out of the Army in 1940 and understudied Frank Leighton in *Shepherd's Pie*. He played when Mr. Leighton was ill and his success led to an engagement in the revue *Up and Doing* at the Saville, with Binnie Hale, Leslie Henson, Stanley Holloway, Cyril Ritchard and Patricia Burke again. A succession of glamorous juvenile parts followed in *Fine and Dandy*, *The Magic Carpet*, *The Lilac Domino*, *Sign No More* and *Pacific 1860*.



GRAHAM PAYN
as he appears in *Ace of Clubs*.
(Picture by Angus McBean)

Now in *Ace of Clubs* he gives clear proof of an ability to sing, act and dance, especially in the number entitled "Something About a Sailor," for which his old friend, Freddie Carpenter, has arranged a slick nautical dance routine. The part of Harry Hornby appeals to Mr. Payn because it is a live human character, with guts and the courage to see things through.

"This Could Be True," as he sings to the heroine of the story—and therein lies the attraction of the show for him. It could all so easily happen to any young sailor and an attractive young girl with a job as entertainer in a cheap Soho night club. As people they are much more convincing than the Ruritanian royalties so frequently featured in musical plays.

He prefers playing an honest-to-goodness Jack Tar rather than those sophisticated aristocrats in tails which came his way in revue. He prefers to leave Men-about-Town to the rising Jack Buchanans, finding it far more refreshing to play a convincing hero in a musical play with a contemporary setting. He has nothing but admiration for this latest work by Noël Coward. To those who have condemned it as old-fashioned he indicates that it is a satirical comment on the times in which we live. "What could be more shrewd," he asks, "than the glimpse Mr. Coward gives us in Soho Square of the contemporary British Working Man and the Three Juvenile Delinquents?"

the past, he had never stood on the stage and looked out into the vastness of that auditorium which holds well over 2,000 people. It was a terrifying sight, and so was the colossal ship which Jo Mielziner, the designer, had built on the stage . . . all so much mightier than the New York production in which Mr. Power had admired the magnificent playing of Henry Fonda in the title rôle.

Instead of being scared by the mightiness of the Coliseum, he took it as a challenge. Two other members of his family had made their mark on the London stage, so he determined to follow their footsteps and prove himself worthy of bearing their name. The triumphant shouts that greeted the fall of the curtain on the first night, for that huge cast, so ably led by Mr. Power, proved that he had won his spurs.

"Please do not think that I am being politely flattering," smiled Mr. Power, "when I tell you that there is nothing in any theatre in the world like the applause of a London audience when they are really pleased. Although the Coliseum audience is so large, I cannot help feeling, as they express their approval, that each individual has enjoyed himself and wants the cast to know it. On that account each performance is gratifying in its own particular way.

"*Mister Roberts* can be regarded as an all-male play, since the only feminine rôle is of a few minutes duration and plays no vital part in the plot. For all that, this story of sex-starved sailors in the 'sorry old bucket' of a U.S. Navy Cargo Ship delivering tooth-paste and toilet-rolls to the fleet, has an equally strong appeal to both men and women. Not many people have lived on board ship in a little self-governed, self-supporting world, run entirely by men, and for that reason playgoers seem interested to learn something about a mode of life from which the fairer sex is excluded. Such everyday qualities as loyalty and affection take on a new meaning when existing between men and men, rather than between men and women, and on that account an all-male play, such as *Mister Roberts*, is bound to excite the curiosity of playgoers who also claim to be students of life."

A RECENT book that should prove invaluable to Little Theatre players and especially to amateurs is *Stage Make-up* by Yoti Lane (Hutchinsons, 15/- net). Miss Lane is Director of Cambridge House Theatre School, lecturer in drama at the City Institute and also a professional playwright.

The author's wide experience in the field makes her an authority and she has the knack of presenting her information in a most workmanlike way. The book is divided into three parts under the headings General Character Make-up and Ancillaries of Make-up. In part one Miss Lane deals with among other subjects, the special difficulties of the amateur; beauty on the stage and "straight" make-up. Part two is very thorough, dealing with all ages and types of parts, including make-up for concerts, variety and even photographs. Part three, a most practical section, deals with make-up for television as well as stage, and touches on hair styles, wigs and beards. Most invaluable are the make-up charts included, and detailed instructions for the casts of a number of famous plays, including one-act plays.

Every amateur actor should have a copy of this book, for correct make-up is of the greatest value in developing any character, especially on the small stage and in the intimate surroundings which usually apply to amateur productions. The illustrations which are included, giving examples of Miss Lane's work as make-up artist, are most illuminating.

Among other books received recently, which it is hoped to review in another issue, are the following: *Edwardian Story* by Shaw Desmond (Rockliff, 18/-); Noël Coward's *Present Indicative* (Heinemann, 12/6); *Stage Lighting* by Frederick Bentham (Pitman, 35s.); *The Lamp of Memory* by Desmond Chapman-Huston (Skeffington, 18/- net); *Voice and Speech in the Theatre* by J. Clifford Turner (Pitman, 15/-); *Diary of a Film* by Jean Cocteau (Dobson, 10/6); and the following published plays: *Play Parade* by Noël Coward, volumes 2 and 3 (Heinemann, 12/6 each); *Stratton* by Ronald Duncan (Faber, 9/6); *Time and the Conways* by J. B. Priestley (Heinemann, 2/6); *Plays of the Year 1949* (Paul Elek, 12/6).

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Picture by J. Peter Happel

Romney Brent, Francis Lederer, Faye Emerson and Helmut Dantine in *Parisienne*, produced by The Festival Theatre, a new repertory group.

Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT E. MAWBY GREEN

WITH most attractions on the boards struggling to survive the annual summer slump, an ambitious new repertory group known as The Festival Theatre put in its first bid for fame with Ashley Dukes' adaptation of Henri Becque's *Parisienne*, which "comedy of morals," we are told, besides being a staple commodity of the French theatre is also popular fare with audiences in the British provinces. Why this should be is one of those Trans-Atlantic mysteries the theatre is so fond of and we shall leave it for UNESCO to solve. Certainly no one in the small New York audience was perceptibly titillated by the affairs of the scheming and flirtatious Clothilde. Being young, pretty and French, they all knew she had an older and unsuspecting husband plus an excitable lover, and when she ditched the latter for something younger, no one even bothered to give a French shrug of the shoulders.

The guiding lights of The Festival Theatre, Sam Wanamaker, Terese Hayden and Harriett Ames, probably saw in *Parisienne* a frothy entertainment full of Gallic gaiety and wit, which their all-star cast could play with urbanity, but once mounted on stage,

it turned out to be a series of dull conversations where even the lulls were disturbed by laboured epigrams.

Faye Emerson as the wench who has her cake and eats it had her notices for looking so edible herself. Since her welcome Broadway debut as the temperamental star in *The Play's the Thing* a season or two ago, Miss Emerson has become the busiest actress in American television as well as the High Priestess of the plunging neckline. How she manages to conduct two television shows of her own, appear as guest star on every other video programme, do a few dramatic shots, get seen nightly in the best night clubs and restaurants with all the eligible men in town, and still find time for this summer stage engagement is too exhausting even to think about.

Francis Lederer, who, it is difficult to believe, has not been seen on Broadway since he replaced Laurence Olivier as Katharine Cornell's leading man in *No Time for Comedy*, is given the credit for extracting the most laughs of the evening as the jealous Lafont, lover number one. This, he achieves by a good deal of overacting, but it

(Continued overleaf)

is hard to blame him for behaving like one of the men in a Mae West comedy, for the audience had to be aroused somehow. Romney Brent as the husband and Helmut Dantine in the brief role of the second suitor emerged with the rest of the cast, unscathed by the play.

Next, The Festival Theatre will present Luise Rainer in Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea* and perhaps things will be brighter for the group then. Meanwhile, The Arena theatre is steadily building a permanent niche for itself in the Broadway scene, its third programme, a revival of Gian-Carlo Menotti's musical plays, *The Medium* and *The Telephone*, doing better business than *Julius Caesar* which, in turn, topped the receipts of *The Show-Off*.

While some reviewers found the jest of *The Telephone* wearing thin (a suitor cannot propose to his girl as she has a severe case of female telephonitis), the audience was delighted with it, the intimacy of the "in-the-round" staging being ideally suited for such an intimate idea. *The Medium*, on the other hand, underwent a stronger shift in values, not only because of the staging but because of a major cast replacement, in which a whale of a woman, new to New York, Zelma George, took over the title role created by Marie Powers, who is still busy across the street from The Arena theatre in Mr. Menotti's prize winning *The Consul*.

Miss George, tearing around the small stage in a wheelchair, is determined to scare the living daylight out of the spectators and from the response to her performance very few, apparently, escape her evil spell. Her Madame Flora is a cruel, intense, hideous, brooding fraud, who all but overwhelms her excellent supporting players, Evelyn Keller and Leo Coleman, which might not be exactly what Mr. Menotti had in mind, but makes for exciting theatre.

* * * *

A good motion picture that should have been better, Stanley Kramer's production of *The Men*, is running into difficulty getting shown in England. Dealing with paraplegic veterans, men paralysed below the waist, their bodily functions are discussed by their doctor with the words bowel and bladder naturally coming into play. This, apparently, is too much for the British censor and he wants these words deleted. Mr. Kramer feels otherwise and is headed for England to argue it out. Let it be said immediately that there was not a gasp or giggle from the Radio City Music Hall audience when these words came from the screen, and the Music Hall is known as a "family house," its policy being to present nothing that might possibly be construed as offensive.

Filmed in a ward of the Birmingham Veterans' Hospital just outside of Los Angeles, California, *The Men* moves naturalistically into the tremendous physical

and psychological problems of these victims of war who can never return to a normal life. Their plight is set forth honestly, compassionately and with grim humour, for these men are cut from the same mold as the crew in *Mister Roberts*—the same men facing lifelong personal tragedy. It is a shattering revelation for all unthinking citizens who thought these soldiers moved into their wheelchairs almost painlessly after their catastrophe.

The letdown in the film is the surface treatment accorded the love story. The scene in which the girl's parents try to talk her out of marrying the paraplegic is distressingly shallow—radio writing at its tritest—and as this is the "preparatory scene" for the girl's doubts on her wedding night, that all-important scene fails completely. Add to this the penny dreadful solution of their problem, in which the doctor sends the unforgiving paraplegic back to his wife, by telling him his own wife was confined to a wheelchair but died shortly thereafter and that he would give anything in the world to come home at night and see her waiting for him there—even in a wheelchair—and you know the author indulged in a bit of glib-thinking cheating.

In the central role, Marlon Brando, the brilliant Stanley Kowalski of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, is making his screen debut with fiery impact. Although some reviewers found him miscast as a former college student and his nasal speech unnecessarily slovenly, they will not deny that he is a striking personality gifted with some kind of super-charged brilliance that flares out from the core of the character he is playing. Unlike any other actor on the screen (as a matter of fact, at times, not even like an actor at all), he plays with a burning sincerity and intensity that terrifyingly illuminates the loneliness and courage of the paraplegic.

Mr. Brando's next screen appearance will be with Vivien Leigh in *Streetcar*, a chore he refused to perform for her for the Western End version of the play.

Playing opposite Mr. Brando in *The Men* is Teresa Wright, an actress we have not seen for a long, long time, but the movies have not changed her a bit; she's still the same sweet, young, understanding thing of ten years ago. A pity, too, for she certainly has more talent than that. There is talk that she might return to the stage this year and that would be a good thing all around. Dorothy McGuire is also toying with the idea and Barbara Bel Geddes has already been signed for the feminine lead in John Steinbeck's new play, *In the Forests of the Night*. If they all come through, Helen Hayes should feel much better for only the other day she was musing that she and Katharine Cornell were now fifty and there were no young stage actresses left to take their place.

English Plays in Paris

by
L. M. de LANSCAT

Right:

DENISE GREY

the talented French actress who plays the part of Alice, the scatterbrained mother, in the revival of *George and Margaret*, adapted by Marc-Gilbert Sauvajon and Jean Wall, at the Theatre Daunou.



NO season ever closes in Paris without a revival of Shakespeare, if not by a large theatre at least by some young experimental company, thus paying an admiring tribute to the greatest dramatist of all time. Even during the Occupation, Shakespeare ran in both National Theatres—the Comédie Française and the Odéon. The National Theatres, as is probably known, are run on a repertory basis with daily changes of programme.

This year proved no exception and *Othello*, directed by Jean Meyer, saw the footlights at the French Comédie, in a version faithfully, eloquently, though not over-poetically adapted by Georges Neveux. The abstract decors designed by Gassandre allow of rapid changes and the smooth running production has called forth unqualified approval, though, of course, an effort of imagination is obviously called for to picture colourful Venice and Cyprus from these interchangeable panel effects. However, the designer's conception seems to emphasise both text and characters.

Jean Debucourt, treachery incarnate, is perfect in the part of Iago. He pours out moral poison with such an honest, kindly smile!! And what a wonderfully sweet and luminous Desdemona is Renée Faure, perhaps to date the best actress of the Français! Unluckily for his return to the National stage Aimé Clariond has been miscast in the title part. *Othello* somewhat exceeds this subtle artist's physical capacity. The part, heavy indeed to carry, seldom suits the

modern type of actor and slim, elegant Clariond, all intelligence and distinction, has nothing of the savage, and his measured, despairing moans leave us cold. (By the way, for some inexplicable reason the Clown is made to speak French with an English accent!)

The Company of Three, directed by Marc Gentilhomme, was responsible for the production at the Young Companies' Annual Competition, of another Elizabethan tragedy, contemporary with *Hamlet* and *Othello*, *The Tragedy of The Avenger* by Cyril Tourneur, and won high praise for their rendering of a difficult 17th Century piece.

Typical of its time in passion, fights and murders, the tragedy with Jacques Duval in the lead, was misunderstood by the majority of the public who laughed at the wrong moments, maybe because of the clumsy, too literal translation by two youngsters, Jean Stephane and Jean Toury. Many mistook the play for an exaggerated stunt of some unknown modern author and even enquired for Cyril Tourneur's address at the box office! Nevertheless, excitement held throughout the piece and *The Avenger* later enjoyed a run in the provinces.

At the Oeuvre Theatre actor-manager Raymond Rouleau played and directed *The Gioconda Smile*, adapted by Georges Neveux from the play by Aldous Huxley. The play seemed less poignant than the original story, especially in the third act where the truth

(Continued overleaf)

serum is used in order to save the innocent hero before the final curtain, and bring about a happy ending. Slightly lacking in the British climate, for those acquainted with that climate, *The Gioconda Smile* was well staged and sympathies went out to talented Raymond Rouleau wrongly accused of poisoning his ailing wife. Worthy of mention also was Louis Blanche, a truly British irascible invalid colonel. The play had a good run.

J. B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, adapted by Michel Arnaud, was presented at the Studio des Champs-Elysees. The tiny stage made it difficult for clever director Pierre Valde to create the proper surroundings for a well-to-do British family, but the human touch, furnished by the Inspector—symbol of conscience—appealed to French audiences, and Constant Remy was moving and true in this role. The rest of the company lacked style except Catherine Damet as the daughter filled with remorse.

The Studio is now presenting George Bernard Shaw's delicious comedy *Arms and The Man*, adapted by A. and H. Hamon. Critics and playgoers are enthusiastic about G.B.'s wit and the play, directed by young Pierre Franck, is quaintly costumed and decorated by a new Portuguese designer, Paolo Ferreira, and promises to carry on happily.

We now come to the outstanding successes. First and foremost, R. C. Sheriff's *Miss Mabel*, adapted by Claude-André Puget, in collaboration with Hélène Frédéric Lara, is faultlessly directed by Jean Mercure at the St. Georges Theatre. Its 250 performances will be followed this autumn by an extended European tour. Sensitive Ludmilla Pitoeff in the name part undeniably possesses the gift of the kind of sincerity to draw tears. Ever since the beginning of her career, many years ago in Switzerland, Ludmilla Pitoeff has remained the idol of playgoers, and as Miss Mabel, who murdered her egoistic old sister for the sake of other more worthy people, she is adored by critics and audiences alike.

Another smash hit is the recent revival of *George and Margaret* by Gerald Savory, adapted by Marc-Gilbert Sauvajan and Jean Wall, at the Theatre Daunou. Denise Grey is undoubtedly the French actress who senses most the qualities inherent in Anglo-Saxon authors. Plausibly eccentric as the head of a topsy-turvy family and extremely elegant,

she is the joy of the evening. Brigitte Aubert is splendid as the romantic and nervy little daughter, and Carpentier is a sympathetic father.

Opinions diverge on *Jupiter Laughs*, the first play of the world-famed novelist A. J. Cronin, who is much appreciated in France. Adapted by Raoul Praxy and Charles-Henri Richard, this work cannot be denied depth and insight into characters, but their staged evolution is not altogether convincing. Although very well played, especially by Jean Servais, who gives a profound study of Doctor Venner, Leon Walther and Blanche Brundy—an inspired Miss Davis—the working out of the plot was considered rather tame and lacking in the grip expected from such a celebrated writer.

Theatre Herbetot's productions are always interesting. A long run of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* a few years ago inspired the management to stage *Moby Dick* by actor Paul Oetly from the famous book of Herman Melville, translated by Jean Giono. It is no wonder the strong part of Captain Achab, skimming the seas in search of his symbolic white whale, attracted that excellent artist Oetly. Absence of love interest probably accounts for the lack of support given to this large "fresco" with its big cast and beautiful, crazy marine setting designed by Moncorbier.

We shall pass over *No Orchids For Miss Blandish* by James Hadley Chase, adapted by Marcel Duhamel and Eliane Charles, and directed by Alexander Dundas at the Grand Guignol—an overdose of assault, cruelty and sadism. The French Actors' Guild Council has lately suspended leading lady Nicole Riche and rebuked producers for scandalous publicity in the staging of a simulated abduction of the heroine during an interval. A great deal has been written and said about such unorthodox methods of drawing public attention.

There have been some 300 full-house performances of *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the Edouard the VIIth Theatre. Translated by Paule Beaumont, adapted by Jean Cocteau and directed by Raymond Rouleau, in the American setting, Tennessee Williams' renowned and controversial play was much discussed, as was the feminine lead in Arletty's capable hands. There was an exceptional rendering of Stella's part by Helena Bossis.

(Continued on page facing)

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Finally, a few lines about two English language ventures in Paris. First, the British one at the Comédie Wagram run by Maxime Fabert and Pamela Stirling during the summer and autumn months. *A Woman for Two* by Jean de Letraz, adapted by the Misses Pamela Stirling and Hearnden, is being given the English version at 6.30 p.m. daily, and the French one following at 9 p.m. Secondly, the American Club Theatre (ART) Producers—directors Anne Gerlette and George Voskoven, on the small "Humour" stage, which has already received mention in *Theatre World*. They now play nightly and have a good following and press notices. *Our Town*, recently billed, after *No Exit* translated from Sartre, is very well performed indeed and the whole cast is to be praised without reserve.

The Watergate Theatre

SPECIAL significance to the performance of three plays by J. M. Synge was given by the presence on the stage of Maire O'Neill, who supplied a living link with the author and whose acting was of that rare quality which seems to be no make-believe but purified reality. Unfortunately the supporting company was mostly an English one and the inevitable result was lack of unity and some sacrifice of purity in the dialect. *The Shadow of the Glen*, in which Miss O'Neill did not appear, owed much to the playing of Wilfrid Brambell, who gave an admirable performance as the Tramp. The play is a dramatic fragment, but it is a fair sample, containing the hilarity and bitterness which are essential Synge.

Expectation was not high for *Riders to the Sea*, which may not be unactable but seems to be unproduceable. In this instance it was devoid of imagination and the lighting was brilliantly bad. Miss O'Neill would doubtless have acted the part of Maurya as movingly as she did under any circumstances but the general production was unworthy of the occasion.

The Tinker's Wedding was more successful. It owed nearly everything to Maire O'Neill's performance as Mary Byrne, that gloriously obstreperous old lady, rich in disrepute. What could be done in this most Irish play, without the advantage of being oneself Irish, was well done by Russell Thorndike as the Priest and by Olga Edwardes as the young woman with a fancy for holy wedlock.

Through all the beautiful haze of words, there is clearly seen, all the while, a precise view of life, a concentrated philosophy. These characters have the hard individuality expressed in poetic phrases which makes them comparable to those of Shakespeare.

H.G.M.

IN January 1949, at Rudolf Steiner Hall, we saw Oxford University Players perform the First Quarto *Hamlet*. This was followed in July at the Fortune Theatre by Nahum Tate's *King Lear*. It seemed that a new standard for amateur productions had been set. "The Company of Seven," consisting of actors and actresses from the University of Oxford, do not closely approach that standard and may be described as rather rough and ready mummers. They fought their way through *Hamlet* valiantly and this is no easy achievement; but *Hamlet* is a very notable work after all and it demands much more than they could bring to it.

Antony Landon had the makings of a Hamlet, certainly, but his great gifts need trimming, by thought and discipline. He knew the lines and jet-propelled them as long as his breath held out. Sometimes he would melt lovingly over a phrase, any phrase, but they were for the most part wild and whirling words, my lord. His treatment of Ophelia and Gertrude resembled a terrier worrying a doll.

The only present-day name on the programme was that of Lt.-Col. Sinclair, he having witnessed the play "at divers times." However, it was pleasant to see again Barbara Carter, remembered for a delicately pointed performance as Cordelia's confidante in *Lear*, but it was not easy to recognise her, for bewigged and costumed as Ophelia was, like a heavy village fraulein, she seemed like a linnets be-buzzarded. She re-acted with delicate sensitivity throughout in a manner not thrown away in a small theatre. Gertrude was, as usual nowadays and excusable in this case, a very young lady to have such a crowded past. Edwardian in appearance and manner, until she removed her motoring veil, she had distinction but no great dramatic power. Without her veil, she appeared frailly woe-begone—a very Ophelia.

Claudius was a kind, complacent man, no villain. Rugged and humble, with their heads uncovered, he and Gertrude looked at one moment like Joseph and Mary. Polonius was a tall and serious pantaloon. The young actor who played Horatio looked right, moved with requisite grace and spoke with proper feeling and intelligence.

Costumes had a bedraggled, makeshift appearance. For a tour such as this ideal costumes are not easily forthcoming, because it is difficult to give the wardrobe proper care. A vicious circle is indicated.

Simplicity of setting, enforced by conditions, is all very well, but to make the King and Queen of Denmark share a packing-case when they want to sit down is carrying the point to excess.

H.G.M.

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TW6

Amateur Stage

Notes and Topics

NO less than 14 Civil Service Amateur Dramatic Societies have entered for the Second Drama Festival of New Plays to be performed in competition this autumn for the Lord Vansittart Drama Trophy. The adjudicator will be Miss Barbara Francis, who is one of the most brilliant and sought-after adjudicators in the country.

The following productions have so far been arranged. On 18th and 19th September at the King George's Hall, the Regional Players of the G.P.O. present *My Eyes Have Seen* by Dr. Mary Sheridan. On the 4th and 5th October the Shepherdess Dramatic Society of the Stationery Office present at the Cripplegate a play by G. F. Gilmour entitled *North Light*. From the 23rd to the 26th October inclusive, the winners of last year's Festival, the Ministry of Food Dramatic Society, present *The Woman Doctor* by Montague Jackson at the Civil Service Commission Theatre.

In November on the 9th and 10th the Mount Players present *North Light* at the Mount Pleasant Theatre, whilst on the 23rd and 24th the Ministry of Health Dramatic Society present *The Woman Doctor*.

The Festival is being managed by a central committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Neilson Gattey, originator of the Festival and its first Organiser. Owing to pressure of other work, Mr. Gattey will not be Organiser this year and his successor will be Mr. Peter Shrivies, the energetic and popular secretary of the Federation of Civil Service Amateur Dramatic Societies to whom all enquiries should be sent at 36 Cornwall Gardens, S.W.7. A Guide to the Festival will be sent in return for a stamped, addressed envelope.

* * *

The Eastleigh Dramatic Society have recently purchased a disused school building, and preliminary work has already commenced on the extensive structural alterations necessary to turn the former Allbrook School into Eastleigh's "Little Theatre." Most of the repair work and clearing of the grounds is being carried out by the members of the Dramatic Society themselves, and the Society's producer, Mr. Ted Tapley, who is also Eastleigh's Deputy Borough Surveyor, is architect, designer, builder, clerk of the works and general labourer for the proposed alterations.

The Society's performances at the Town Hall will continue as usual, but meanwhile the school will be converted into a practice theatre, and the building used for workshop, store, rehearsal rooms and training school.

One of the first steps contemplated is the addition of a workshop at the rear of the building. Then the interior will be converted

(Continued on next page)

COMPANY MEETING

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PICTURE CORPORATION

A Successful Year

The twenty-third annual general meeting of Associated British Picture Corporation Limited was held on 3rd August in London, Sir Philip Warter (the chairman) presiding.

The following is an extract from his circulated statement:—

The trading profits of the Group amount to £2,205,624, against £2,038,762 for the previous year. Of the net profit of the Group amounting to £543,622, £11,308 represents Profits attributable to Outside shareholders of subsidiary companies, and the balance applicable to the Corporation of £532,314 compares with £450,613 last year. After deducting £24,519 in respect of profits retained by subsidiary companies, there remains a balance of £507,795, representing the Net Profit of the Corporation for the year.

Receipts at the Box Office have shown a downward trend. The only satisfactory way of arresting the downward trend is by way of better films. Even in the Greater London area, where attendances and receipts are down by a greater percentage than in the rest of the country, the results on the really successful films were satisfactory.

The gross takings of the Corporation's cinemas last year amounted to £18,722,253, out of which no less than £6,891,835 was paid in Entertainment Duty.

In making every effort to comply with the law, we have shown a number of films, which, through lack of entertainment value, resulted in substantial losses in the cinemas where they were shown. For the year commencing 1st October 1950, the Quota has been fixed at 30 per cent., which is a realistic Quota and one which it should be possible to fulfil with pictures of reasonable quality.

The Corporation's Studios were kept fully employed and although our film production operations resulted in a loss, I am pleased to say that the position generally shows an improvement. The markets available to British films do not permit a sufficient return on the successful films to offset losses on the inevitable failures. Government finance and Quotas are not the answer.

Until the basis of taxation is adjusted in such a way that film production becomes a reasonable commercial risk your Board, although anxious to support the country's production effort to the full, is bound to view the making of pictures with considerable anxiety.

Having regard to the difficult conditions the results are excellent. We have many problems to face, but the Corporation is now in a better position than ever before to meet them, and I therefore look to the future with confidence.

The report was adopted.

Amateur Stage (Contd.)

into an auditorium with a raked floor. Mr. Tapley has a plan for constructing the raked floor in such a way that it can be converted into a flat floor when the auditorium is needed for any other purpose.

Seating capacity will be small but very comfortable, and productions will be on an intimate scale.

* * *

Mr. John Burrell adjudicated at the 17th annual Welwyn Drama Festival in June, with three original one-act plays included in the week's total of twenty-two entrants.

* * *

A summer school in opera was held at Wimpole Park Training College, ten miles from Cambridge, from 26th July to 3rd August. Organised by the National Council of Social Service, the course was directed by Mr. Sumner Austin.

* * *

For their eighth annual open-air production, Northampton Drama Club staged Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters* for nine performances at the end of June in the courtyard of Abington Abbey, once associated with Judith, Shakespeare's daughter.

COPIES of *Theatre World* 1939-1949 wanted. Please write, stating price, to: Arts Theatre, Ipswich.

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